



## **Transportation Advisory Committee**

Date: September 8, 2021.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

### **Minutes.**

#### **1. Administration.**

Members in Attendance: Dan Amstutz (DPCD), Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Corey Rateau (APD)

Members of Public in Attendance: Stephanie Trinkle, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, and Joe Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

#### **B. Approval of August 11, 2021 Meeting Notes.**

The Minutes of the August 11, 2021 meeting were approved.

#### **C. Correspondence Sent/Received from 08/10/21 to 09/02/21.**

- Copy of letter dated July 14, 2021 from Stephanie Trinkle to Select Board regarding Eastern Avenue safety concerns. See #4. Discussion: Eastern Ave Traffic Calming.

#### **D. Ethics training for volunteer committee members.**

TAC Members are considered special municipal employees and must complete ethics training.

**E. TAC update of Bylaws and Committee Positions.**

TAC Working Group comprised of Laura Swan, Howard Muise, and Scott Smith, is in the process of updating its Bylaws. TAC discussed the term “citizen” used in the existing Bylaws. Howard Muise interpreted it as meaning a resident or a person with a connection to the Town, for example, an owner of a business in Arlington. The term also needs to encompass TAC Members appointed from other Town Departments or Committees such as DPCD and DPW. Dan Amstutz will send the question to the DPCD Director for clarification.

Laura Swan asked if any TAC Members would be interested in serving as TAC liaison to the Parking Committee, Disability Commission, and the Council on Aging. Melissa Laube and Tycho Nightingale will discuss it offline with her.

**2. Public Comments.** There were no public comments.

**3. Town Issues/Activities.**

**A. Wayne Chouinard provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW):**

Completing construction of curb ramps at Dallin School. In response to a question from Scott Smith, Wayne Chouinard responded that gas work is being performed on Warren St, which includes grind and inlay on trench repair.

There is an open bid for pedestrian safety improvements, namely rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (“RRFB”) to-be installed at (1) on Gray St at Quincy St; and (2) on Lowell St at the Reservoir. In response to a question from Laura Swan, he added that these RRFBs are push-button activated.

Petru Sofio informed TAC that the flashing beacon on Mill St at the Bikeway is unreliable. It seems to work on cloudy days, but has not been working at night. Jeff Maxtutis confirmed the observation, noting that the flashing has been a good addition to safety. Wayne Chouinard responded that a diagnostic check was performed recently. As the equipment was installed about a decade ago, it might need new batteries. The diagnostic check will be redone, and a battery replacement will be requested.

**B. Dan Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).**

Broadway Plaza. Construction will begin next week for MWRA pipe replacement. Project is expected to start on October 15 with work expected to last through April. Verizon has utilities located on top of the pipe, which needs to-be relocated. Café Nero and Twyrl will move their outdoor seating to the parklet in

front of Abbott's Creamery. Next spring, Broadway Plaza will be reconstructed in a new design that was developed in conjunction with the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project. This was originally planned for last year and was delayed due to COVID-19.

MassTrails Grant of \$80,000 was awarded to the Town for a plan to connect the Mystic River Path to the Minuteman Bikeway. Grant is out for bid.

**C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).**

**4. Discussion: Eastern Ave Traffic Calming**

Stephanie Trinkle contacted Dan Amstutz a few months ago regarding traffic on Eastern Ave near Brackett School. They met on a school day at Brackett School, and they observed missing signage and tree branches obscuring the 20-mph flashing beacon and signs. In addition to the school, many people use the area for the view of Boston, the playground, and sports fields. There are many more rideshare and delivery vehicles driving on Eastern Ave. Automobiles parking on both sides of the roadway, and "school" signs.

Stephanie Trinkle informed TAC that she was nervous about crossing Eastern Ave to Robbins Farm Park. She noted that the placement of the crossing sign is not located proximate to the crosswalk (between Bellington St and Eustis St on Eastern Ave). There are blind children and children with disabilities who attend Brackett, yet there are no signs or notices.

She mentioned that the Kindergarten playground is located on Fayette St, and Kindergarten classes eat lunch on the sidewalk. She is concerned about a distracted driver crashing into Kindergarteners seated for lunch.

Brackett School also uses Robbins Farm Park during the school day. The street should be 20-mph during the school day. Notably, the 20-mph flashing sign does not flash. Petru Sofio concurred that Eastern Ave should be made into a 20-mph safety zone, adding that it can be challenging to walk and bike there.

Stephanie Trinkle mentioned that Paul Schlichtman recommended MassDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) be restarted at Brackett School. Paul Schlichtman commented that Brackett School is a special case with its use of Robbins Farm Park. Regarding the 20-mph flasher, it should be programmed to-be consistent with school start-end.

Jeff Maxtutis added that TAC reviewed the area a few years ago. An updated signage inventory needs to-be undertaken and guidelines on signs need to-be followed. Automobile parking on Eastern Ave slows traffic speeds. SRTS requires parent volunteers to take on the efforts.

Dan Amstutz said that he submitted a tree-trim request. In addition, APD notified him that many signs have been replaced or installed recently. School zone advance warning signs will be added. Stephanie Trinkle concluded that the Brackett Principal is onboard and will be considering a SRTS Arrival and Dismissal Audit.

## **5. Discussion: SRTS Dallin**

Laura Swan updated TAC that there was a Community Meeting regarding the pilot Arrival and Dismissal plan for Dallin Elementary School, which was developed by Judy Crocker of MassDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS). In response to residents' concerns expressed during the meeting, parking observations will be conducted before and during the pilot on George St and Renfrew St, which will be designated school parking. Additionally, traffic counts will be conducted before and during pilot on Oakland Ave, as traffic will be diverted due to the closure of Florence Ave in front of Dallin School.

Jeff Maxtutis suggested hiring a firm to acquire traffic counts before and during the pilot. He added that pricing is not very expensive. Dan Amstutz mentioned that there is still a question about where to conduct the counts. The proposed changes will need to go to the Select Board in October if this is to-be made permanent.

Paul Schlichtman commented that, for safety reasons, one-way streets should be permanent one-way instead of one-way only during school hours. He mentioned that school area and park are used during all hours.

## **6. Update: Mass Ave at Appleton St.**

The Design Review Committee will send its recommendations to the Select Board next Monday. The Select Board is expected to act.

## **7. Update: Mt. Gilboa Traffic Concerns**

RRFB and speed feedback sign is out to bid for installation at Lowell St at the Reservoir.

## **8. Update: Thompson Area Traffic Calming**

Laura Swan and Scott Smith informed TAC that traffic in the Thompson School area is back to pre-COVID levels. Arrival conditions will be observed again, particularly North Union cut-through traffic caused by backup on River St. We will follow-up with the Thompson Principal on the SRTS Arrival and Dismissal Plan.

## **9. Update: Thorndike Place development and 1165R Mass Ave development**

Thorndike Place: Dan Amstutz informed TAC that the project has changed form. It will now include ~12 Town Houses on Dorothy Rd and an independent living senior facility of ~120 units. The footprint is smaller than previously proposed with fewer parking spaces. Accordingly, Transportation Demand Measures (TDM) will be scaled back. TAC Executive Committee provided comments to ZBA, which will review the project in the coming months.

1165R Mass Ave: Last Thursday, ZBA approved 1165R Mass Ave.

## **10. Update: Chestnut Street Traffic Calming**

Dan Amstutz said that Town Manager and DPW are working on Chestnut St traffic calming recommendations. The No Right Turn On Red (“NTOR”) sign has been installed. Paul Schlichtman added that there are now a lot of automobiles honking, as drivers further back in the queue cannot see the NTOR sign. He suggested adding a second NTOR sign further back to alleviate honking.

Petru Sofio and Scott Smith discussed inefficiency in the traffic light phasing and driver compliance with NTOR. They recommend examining reprogramming of the traffic lights to permit Chestnut St right turn traffic during the appropriate signal phase.

In response to a question from Howard Muise, Wayne Chouinard responded that the traffic-signal equipment is new, and it can be programmed to accommodate the timing change. He added that a traffic engineer with the appropriate credentials will need to authorize the change.

Howard Muise, Scott Smith, and Wayne Chouinard discussed how to move forward with obtaining the proper authorizations. Wayne Chouinard will discuss the changes with a traffic engineer to move forward with modifying the signal phasing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.